

## PROSPECT; or, *View of the Moral World.*

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### *Comments upon the Sacred Writings of the Jews and Christians. Exodus Chapter 19.*

THE preceding chapter contains nothing but wholesome advice, given by Jethro, Priest of Midian, and father-in-law to Moses, relative to the establishment of a judicial system; but in this 19th chapter we again behold the same deceptive conjurations of the dexterous leader of an ignorant, credulous and fanatic people. The farce of spiritual aristocracy is here played off with great art and impressive ingenuity; the people are kept in a state of blindness while Moses is reciprocating his visits from Mount Sinai to the Plains, and from the residence of the people back to the Mount, under the pretence of being the bearer of important messages from Jehovah to the chosen band. These delusive movements mixed with terrific considerations were intended as preparatory steps to the promulgation of the Decalogue on which so much praise has been bestowed, and concerning the character of which we shall comment at large in our next number. It is curious to observe but it is a solemn truth that all miraculous systems of religions are stuffed with hypocrisy and unfair dealing; this is remarkable in the case before us and no one can read with attention this 19th chapter of Exodus without being fully convinced that Moses and Aaron with their little spiritual band of pretended demi-gods were imposing grossly upon the people, under colour of holding secret communication with the *most high* upon Mount Sinai. Verse 21 is as follows: "And the Lord said unto Moses, go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." Here the true character of priest-craft is manifest, and stands fully exposed to our view! They were terribly apprehensive that the people would break through and gaze!—Gaze at what? Why gaze at the tricks and deceptions of Moses and Aaron

and thus discover that they had been the dupes of their more artful and designing leaders. These men had skill and dexterity enough to know that their own power and safety depended upon keeping the people in ignorance. If they had been permitted to enter the *sanctum sanctorum*, the holy of holies, and had found nothing there but the cunning hypocrisy of dexterous jugglers, they would have been disgusted with such unrighteous impositions, and sworn vengeance against their authors. Such however, has been the character of priest-craft in all ages and countries; the priests are always afraid the people will break through and gaze—that is break thro' that veil of mystery which they have piously spread over the beautiful sun of truth, to conceal it from vulgar eyes lest it should destroy vision. Good souls how much mankind are indebted to you for your kind care of their intellectual optics! Were it not for this sacerdotal circumspection rash and thoughtless man would have broke through the sacred veils of religious mystery—would have discovered the glories of the most high,—the enchanting dexterities of the priesthood, and must have utterly perished! O ye holy fathers how much we owe to your pious and spiritual care! Go on to perpetuate your mysterious ceremonies,—to blind the eyes of the people, and to render indistructible your clerical predicament; but remember that reason has sworn upon the altar of eternal justice, that you shall one day answer at her bar, and at the bar of God, for your crimes and impositions—for the miseries you have brought upon the human race.

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To the Rev. JOHN MASON,†

*One of the Ministers of the Scotch Presbyterian church,  
of New-York;*

With Remarks on his account of the visit he made to the  
late General Hamilton.

“Come now, let us REASON together, saith the Lord.”  
This is one of the passages you quoted from your bible,

† This piece was intended to be in the Prospect of last week, but did not arrive time enough to be inserted,



in your conversation with General Hamilton, as given in your letter, signed with your name, and published in the Commercial Advertiser, and other New-York papers, and I re-quote the passage to shew that your *Text* and your *Religion* contradict each other.

It is impossible to *reason* upon things *not comprehensible by reason*; and therefore, if you keep to your text, which priests seldom do, (for they are generally either above it, or below it, or forget it) you must admit a religion to which reason can apply, and this, certainly, is not the Christian religion.

There is not an article in the Christian religion that is cognizable by reason. The Deistical article of your religion, *the belief of a God*, is no more a Christian article, than it is a Mahometan article. It is an universal article, common to all religions, and which is held in greater purity by Turks than by Christians; but the Deistical church is the only one which holds it in real purity; because that church acknowledges no co-partnership with God. It believes in him solely; and knows nothing of Sons, married Virgins, nor Ghosts. It holds all these things to be the fables of priest-craft.

Why then do you talk of reason, or refer to it, since your religion has nothing to do with reason, nor reason with that. You tell people, as you told Hamilton, that they must have *faith*. Faith in what? You ought to know that before the mind can have faith in any thing, it must either know it as a fact, or see cause to believe it on the probability of that kind of evidence that is cognizable by reason: But your religion is not within either of these cases; for, in the first place, you cannot prove it to be fact; and in the second place, you cannot support it by reason, not only because it is not cognizable by reason, but because it is contrary to reason. What reason can there be in supposing, or believing, that God put *himself to death, to satisfy himself, and be revenged on the Devil on account of Adam*; for tell the story which way you will it comes to this at last.

As you can make no appeal to reason in support of an

unreasonable religion, you, then (and others of your profession) bring yourselves off by telling people, they must not believe in *reason* but in *revelation*. This is the artifice of habit without reflection. It is putting *words* in the place of *things*; for do you not see, that when you tell people to believe in revelation, you must first prove that what you *call* revelation, *is* revelation; and as you cannot do this, you put the *word* which is easily spoken, in the place of the *thing* you cannot prove. You have no more evidence that your Gospel is revelation than the Turks have that their Koran is revelation, and the only difference between them and you is, that they preach *their* delusion and you preach *yours*.

In your conversation with General Hamilton, you say to him, "The *simple truths* of the Gospel which require *no abstruse investigation*, but faith in the veracity of *God, who cannot lie*, are best suited to your present condition."

If those matters you call "*simple truths*," are what you call them, and *require no abstruse investigation*, they would be so obvious that reason would easily comprehend them; yet the doctrine you preach at other times is, *That the mysteries of the Gospel are beyond the reach of reason*. If your first position be true, that they are "*simple truths*," priests are unnecessary, for we do not want preachers to tell us the sun shines: and if your second be true, the case, as to effect, is the same, for it is waste of money to pay a man to explain unexplainable things, and loss of time to listen to him. That "*God cannot lie*," is no advantage to your argument, because it is no proof that priests cannot, or that the bible does not. Did not Paul lie when he told the Thessalonians that the general resurrection of the dead would be in his life-time, and that he should go up alive along with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thess. chap. 4, v. 27.

You spoke of what you call, "*the precious blood of Christ*." This savage stile of language belongs to the priests of the Christian religion. The professors of this religion say they are shocked at the accounts of human



sacrifices of which they read in the histories of some countries. Do they not see that their own religion is founded on a human sacrifice, the blood of man, of which their priests talk like so many butchers. It is no wonder the Christian religion has been so bloody in its effects, for it began in blood, and many thousands of human sacrifices have since been offered on the altar of the Christian religion.

It is necessary to the character of a religion, as being true, and immutable as God himself is, that the evidences of it be equally the same through all periods of time and circumstance. This is not the case with the Christian religion, nor with that of the Jews that preceded it, (for there was a time, and that within the knowledge of history, when these religions did not exist) nor is it the case with any religion we know of but the religion of Deism. In this the evidences are eternal and universal — “*The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work,—Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*”\* But all other religions are made to arise from some local circumstance, and are introduced by some temporary trifle which its partizans call a miracle, but of which there is no proof but the story of it.

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\* This Psalm (19) which is a *Deistical Psalm*, is so much in the manner of some parts of the book of Job, (which is not a book of the Jews, and does not belong to the bible) that it has the appearance of having been translated into Hebrew from the same language in which the book of Job was originally written, and brought by the Jews from Chaldea or Persia, when they returned from captivity. The contemplation of the Heavens made a great part of the religious devotion of the Chaldeans and Persians, and their religious festivals were regulated by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. But the Jews knew nothing about the Heavens, or they would not have told the foolish story of the sun's standing still upon a hill, and the moon in a valley. What could they want the moon for in the day-time?

The Jewish religion, according to the history of it, began in a *wilderness*, and the Christian religion in a *stable*. The Jewish books tell us of wonders exhibited upon Mount Sinai. It happened that nobody lived there to contradict the account. The Christian books tell us of a star that hung over the *stable* at the birth of Jesus. There is no star there now, nor any person living that saw it. But all the stars in the Heavens bear eternal evidence to the truth of Deism. It did not begin in a *stable*, nor in a *wilderness*. It began every where. The theatre of the universe is the place of its birth.

As adoration paid to any being but GOD himself is idolatry, the Christian religion by paying adoration to a man, born of a woman, called Mary, belongs to the Idolatrous class of religions, and consequently the consolation drawn from it is delusion. Between you and your rival in communion ceremonies, Dr. Moore, of the Episcopal church, you have, in order to make yourselves appear of some importance, reduced General Hamilton's character to that of a feeble-minded man, who in going out of the world wanted a passport from a priest. Which of you was first or last applied to for this purpose is a matter of no consequence.

The man, sir, who puts his trust and confidence in God, that leads a just and moral life, and endeavours to do good, does not trouble himself about priest when his hour of departure comes, nor permit priests to trouble themselves about him. They are, in general, mischievous Beings where character is concerned; a consultation of priests is worse than a consultation of physicians. *A Member of the Deistical Congregation.*

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*Lines written on reading the 12th\* verse of 10th chap.  
of Joshua.*

Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Newton and Keil,  
With Flamsted and Plato serene,  
Whence cometh your silence on that great event,  
That happen'd in old Palestine?

\* Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon,  
in the valley of Ajalon.



The sun and the moon at a gen'ral's command,  
 Stood still as if fix'd with a nail,  
*That*, righ over Gibeon stood, it is said,  
*This*, right over Ajalon's vale.  
 Orbs moving in orbits, poles pointing to poles,  
 And plane's inclination to plane,  
 With circles eccentric, concentric, ellipse,  
 All these you correctly explain.  
 In this you're defective, you have not told how  
 Two orbs in their course could stand still,  
 For, many do think, that as well might be stopp'd  
 Two cogs in the wheel of a mill.  
 If General Joshua had a *long day*,  
 His *Antipodes* had a *long night*—  
 These tir'd of the beds, walk'd about and exclaim'd,  
 'What keeps Sol so long from our sight?'  
 Sure *Sumnus* has seized him while bent on his course,  
 And Lullaby sung at his ear,  
 Or Syrens and Trytons with musick most sweet,  
 Have stopp'd his progressive career:  
 Or Thetis, fair goddess of ocean, perhaps,  
 Has on him her influence shed,  
 And by her lewd gambols and amorous mein,  
 Entic'd him to go to her bed:  
 Or Neptune regales at his banquetting house,  
 Where he has invited the Sun,  
 Ambrosia to eat, and sweet nectar to drink,  
 And share in the Deities fun:  
 Or, by his transgressing some primary law,  
 Which coeval was with the world,  
 Omnipotent wrath he has thereby incurr'd,  
 And is to oblivion hurl'd.  
 Thus argu'd disconsolate nations, meanwhile,  
 Their children with hunger did bawl,  
 Pigs squeak'd, horses pranc'd, fowls dropp'd from their  
 roost,  
 And oxen did low at the stall.  
 What doubl'd their fear and increas'd their alarm,  
 What troubl'd their minds more and more,

The *tide* they perceived at full height did remain,  
 And would not depart from the shore.  
 Sea threat'ning destruction to all on its coast,  
 And darkness o'erspreading the land,  
 Led man to conjecture that Neptune and Nox  
 Were jointly supreme in command.  
 Thus all was confusion, suspense and uproar,  
 'Mong man, woman, child, fowl, and beast,  
 When, lo! comes the twilight! anon! in a trice!  
 Bright Pœbus appears in the East.  
 The gloomy despair that pervaded each mind,  
 While darkness imperv'ous remain'd,  
 Was instantly chang'd, and each heart, mind and face,  
 Its wonted appearance regain'd.  
 Unnatural darkness dispell'd on the earth,  
 On sea nature's order restor'd;  
 To him who rules all, songs of praise then were sung,  
 And were with great fervour encor'd.

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### TEMPLE OF NATURE.

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A plan is now under consideration, in this city, for the purchase of a lot, and the erection of a building intended to be used for the worship of One GOD Supreme and Benevolent Creator of the world; and for other purposes of a literaty kind. To facilitate an object so important, a meeting of the friends to Natural Religion will be convened on Monday evening next, at seven o'clock, at SNOW'S, No. 89, Broadway; at which time and place all persons who wish to encourage this plan, are respectfully invited to attend.

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